



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Tony Evers, Governor | Mary M. Kolar, Secretary

October 26, 2020

Dear Union Grove Members, Friends, and Family:

I realize that after seven months, a sort of “pandemic fatigue” may be setting in for some of us. However, as much as we all look forward to an end to COVID-19, it is important to recognize that this crisis continues to worsen in Wisconsin, with new reports of COVID-19 cases climbing and deaths from the disease reaching their highest level yet in our state. According to *The Washington Post’s analysis of state health data*, in the past week new daily reported cases have gone up more than 20 percent, hospitalizations have increased more than 26 percent, and daily reported deaths have risen 22 percent.

Our veterans homes staff continue to valiantly fight against COVID-19, but the odds are still working against them. The American Health Care Association, a national non-profit federation of state health organizations that represents nursing homes, assisted living communities, and facilities for individuals with disabilities, *said* that it was seeing an acceleration in coronavirus infections among their highly vulnerable residents that parallels the increases in the general population and warned that nursing homes could experience a third spike in cases due to community spread.

Unfortunately, since our October 20 update, one employee has tested positive for COVID-19. This means we currently have one member and one employee confirmed with active COVID-19. I am grateful to be able to report that no additional members have tested positive. We continue to test staff twice per week.

While the staff in our homes, as well as hospital workers across the state have been doing an incredible job, it is up to us to prevent further strain on the system. Wisconsin’s healthcare teams cannot shoulder the burden of protecting our state’s most vulnerable residents alone. It is up to all of us to step up and protect ourselves and our communities from this highly contagious virus. Stay home, wear a mask and stay six feet apart when you must go out, and wash your hands.

Finally, if you would like to receive this communication digitally, I encourage you to visit www.WisVetsEmail.com and provide us with your name, email address, and/or cell phone number. Initially, this will not replace paper communications, but we want to be able to provide these updates to you as quickly as possible. We will eventually be transitioning away from paper communications.

Sincerely,

Erin Johnston
Commandant